United Nations A/70/78

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 April 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 80 (a) of the preliminary list*
Oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its sixteenth meeting

Letter dated 14 April 2015 from the Co-Chairs of the Consultative Process addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/245, we were appointed as the Co-Chairs of the sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

We have the honour to submit to you the attached report on the work of the Informal Consultative Process at its sixteenth meeting, which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 6 to 10 April 2015. The outcome of the meeting consists of our summary of issues and ideas raised during the meeting and, in particular, with regard to the topic of focus: "Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic".

In line with past practice, we kindly request that the present letter and the report be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 80 (a) of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Gustavo **Meza-Cuadra**
Don **MacKay**
Co-Chairs

* A/70/50.

15-06051 (E) 080615

Please recycle

Sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

(6-10 April 2015)

Co-Chairs' summary of discussions[1]

1. The United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the Informal Consultative Process) held its sixteenth meeting from 6 to 10 April 2015 and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/245, focused its discussions on the topic entitled "Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic".

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of 68 States, nine intergovernmental organizations and other bodies and entities, and seven non-governmental organizations.[2]

3. The following supporting documentation was available to the meeting: (a) advance, unedited reporting material on the topic of focus of the sixteenth meeting; and (b) format and annotated provisional agenda of the meeting (A/AC.259/L.16).

Agenda items 1 and 2
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

4. The Co-Chairs, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) and Don MacKay (New Zealand), appointed by the President of the General Assembly, opened the meeting.

5. Opening remarks were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

6. The participants adopted the format and annotated provisional agenda and approved the proposed organization of work.

Agenda item 3
General exchange of views

7. A general exchange of views was held at the plenary meetings on 6 and 9 April on the topic of focus, "Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic", as reflected below (paras. 8-34). An information session was held on 7 April (paras. 35-42). The discussions held on the topic of focus within the panel segments are reflected in paragraphs 43 to 115 below.

8. Representatives highlighted the critical importance of recognizing the interlinkages between and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in order to ensure sustained and inclusive economic growth, social

[1] The summary is intended for reference purposes only and not as a record of the discussions.

[2] A list of participants is available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm.

development and environmental protection. They stressed the essential role of oceans in sustainable development, including for poverty eradication, food security and the creation of sustainable livelihoods. They highlighted the contribution of oceans to various industries, such as fishing, aquaculture, shipping and shipbuilding, oil and gas exploitation, mining, the laying of submarine cables and tourism, as well as the ecosystem services provided by oceans, for example in the production of oxygen, the regulation of the climate system and the provision of genetic resources for use in various sectors.

9. In that regard, it was noted that oceans and their resources were essential to all States, whether coastal or landlocked. Representatives of small island developing States emphasized the particular importance of oceans for the survival and livelihoods of their people, economies and cultures.

10. Representatives stressed the importance of conserving and sustainably using oceans and seas and their resources and of protecting marine biodiversity and the marine environment for the achievement of sustainable development. Some representatives noted, in that regard, the need to balance economic activities and the protection of the marine environment.

11. Representatives highlighted the importance of international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, recalling that it provided the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas and its implementation was essential for achieving sustainable development, given that it had the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions at the core of its provisions. Several representatives also recalled the commitments made in other international documents, including the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want", and the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, entitled "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway".

12. Representatives welcomed the timeliness of the topic of focus in the light of the continuing intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and expressed appreciation for the advance, unedited reporting material thereon, which had been made available to them for that meeting (subsequently issued as document A/70/74). Many representatives expressed the view that the meeting could contribute to, and allow for greater understanding of, the post-2015 development agenda process and several suggested that the present summary could be brought to the attention of the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. With regard to the discussions on oceans in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, several representatives emphasized that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

13. Many representatives recalled their support for a stand-alone sustainable development goal on oceans, as reflected in goal 14 of the report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (A/68/970 and Corr.1). Several representatives, however, expressed concern that the status of the legal framework set out in the Convention had not been properly reflected therein (see also para. 39 below).

14. Several representatives drew attention to the critical importance of addressing means of implementation, in particular transfer of technology and capacity development. The importance of science-based and measurable goals and targets was highlighted. The view was expressed that levels of development should be taken into account when establishing goals and targets and that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be adhered to.

15. Some representatives expressed the view that further work on the indicators relating to sustainable development goal 14 was required. The need for Member States to provide input into the development of global indicators was also highlighted by several representatives. Some representatives emphasized that the technical work of the Statistical Commission should be conducted under the supervision of the political negotiating process, in order to avoid the risk of inconsistencies in the overall process. The importance of ensuring a scientific approach to the development of the indicators and creating a mechanism for experts in marine science to provide input was underscored. Some representatives recognized the need for specialist advice and noted that those organizations with competence in oceans should be called upon to provide it. In that regard, the role of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat, the expertise of which went beyond the law of the sea and covered issues relating to oceans in general, was highlighted, and some representatives called for the Division to be fully integrated into the process. Those representatives requested that the concerns raised about the process for developing well-functioning indicators for sustainable development goal 14 should be conveyed to the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

16. Some representatives expressed support for the proposal of a representative to establish an open international process to review the effective implementation of sustainable development goal 14 every three years (see para. 41 below). It was suggested that the Informal Consultative Process could contribute to that review in 2017 or 2018. In that context, it was noted that the sustainable development of oceans, including the implementation of goal 14, should be informed by robust science and knowledge, in order to monitor progress and better understand the role of healthy marine ecosystems.

17. A number of representatives provided information on their efforts to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans, including an overview of policies, legislation, activities and initiatives at the national, regional and global levels. In that context, they indicated what they considered to be the main challenges to effective integration, as well as lessons learned and opportunities to advance the integration of the three dimensions.

18. In particular, many representatives expressed concern regarding the current pressure on oceans and their resources, in particular overfishing, fisheries subsidies and overcapacity, destructive fishing practices, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, pollution, coastal run-off, climate change and ocean acidification, and highlighted corresponding challenges hindering sustainable development. Those pressures and impacts jeopardized the ability of the oceans to provide important ecosystem services, with implications for food security and livelihoods and challenges to local and global economies.

19. Several representatives considered those pressures to be a particular barrier to economic growth and sustainable development for small island developing States,

given their reliance on oceans and their resources. The disproportionate impacts of climate change on developing countries, in particular coastal States and small island developing States, was also emphasized. In that regard, the importance of restoring the productivity of oceans, including by rebuilding fish stocks and reducing multiple pressures on critical marine ecosystems, such as coral reefs, with a view to improving their resilience to withstand the impacts of climate change were considered essential. Those representatives also cited inequitable distribution of revenue from fisheries as a barrier to the sustainable development of their States.

20. Representatives emphasized the implementation of the existing legal framework at the global and regional levels as an important challenge to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable development.

21. Several representatives called for the governance of ocean activities to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. Attention was drawn to the benefits of integrated maritime policies and of promoting "blue growth" or a "blue economy" for sustained economic development. In that context, the Pacific Islands regional ocean policy, the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy, the European Union Integrated Maritime Policy and the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy were referred to, as was the Antananarivo communiqué of 5 March 2015 of the nineteenth meeting of the Economic Commission for Africa Intergovernmental Committee of Experts. Continuing international cooperation in the General Assembly towards a legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction was highlighted by some representatives as a necessary step for an integrated approach.

22. It was also observed that adopting an integrated approach to the management of ocean activities would serve as an effective mechanism for the implementation of the sustainable development goals. In that regard, the need to promote the effective integration of the goals into national action plans was underlined.

23. Some representatives also pointed out that an integrated approach to the management of ocean activities would limit the cumulative effects of human activities within a defined ocean space and help to maintain the health of marine ecosystems. In that regard, a number of representatives stressed the benefits of marine spatial planning and precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation, sustainable use and management of marine resources. Tools such as environmental impact assessments and marine protected areas were also highlighted by many representatives as a means of implementing an integrated approach. The need for sector-specific measures, such as measures to reduce pollution, address fisheries subsidies, destructive fishing practices and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, and promote small-scale and artisanal fisheries was also emphasized by several representatives. Many representatives further highlighted the need to tackle climate change, including through adaptation and mitigation measures, and also to adopt an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and management, with a view to enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and communities. It was noted that, at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015, the participants had underlined the need for action plans on disaster reduction in countries affected by extreme weather events, in particular small island developing States.

24. In addition, some representatives pointed out that the value of marine ecosystem services needed to be visible and included in national accounting, business development and community planning.

25. The importance of maritime boundary delimitation was also underscored by several representatives in the context of resource exploitation for economic benefits, sustainable management of living and non-living resources and in increasing effective maritime surveillance and security.

26. Representatives further stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination at all levels and across sectors for an integrated approach to the management of ocean activities. Several representatives highlighted the need to make use of existing organizations and mechanisms, including at the regional level, to ensure coordination across and between the range of ocean stakeholders. The coordination taking place through UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans and coastal issues within the United Nations system, was noted.

27. The view was expressed that decision-making with regard to management measures on a regional basis was a sound approach, given that capacities, levels of knowledge and priorities varied by region. It was also observed that regional cooperation, such as the Coral Triangle Initiative on coral reefs, fisheries and food security, was an important mechanism for holistic and coordinated management of ocean resources. Some representatives stressed the need for cooperation on issues of common interest between regional organizations with different mandates, including regional fisheries management organizations and regional seas programmes, because they considered such cooperation vital to the integrated management of ocean activities.

28. Several representatives expressed the view that lack of capacity was one of the principal obstacles to advancing sustainable development. In particular, there was a call for increased marine scientific research and scientific capacity to improve knowledge in support of decision-making and sustainable management. There was also a need to enhance the sharing of scientific knowledge and experience as well as technology transfer. Strengthening the science-policy interface was also considered necessary.

29. The need for human resources and institutional development was also highlighted as a necessary prerequisite to deriving benefits from the oceans and achieving sustainability.

30. Several representatives drew attention to the need to build the capacity to exercise the rights and comply with the obligations set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The need for technical assistance with regard to the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles as a basis for economic and social development was highlighted.

31. The importance of enhancing the capacity of developing States to monitor and control activities in their waters, including fisheries, was stressed, as was the importance of protecting small-scale fisheries.

32. Several representatives called for specific support for small island developing States in adopting measures adapted to their unique vulnerabilities, including support for sustainable fisheries by improving the regime for monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing vessels to effectively prevent, deter and eliminate illegal,

unregulated and unreported fishing. Increasing international assistance in monitoring, predicting and identifying coral bleaching and improving strategies to manage reefs to support their natural resilience was also considered critical by several representatives.

33. One representative also drew attention to the particular vulnerabilities faced by landlocked States, including in the context of climate change. It was noted that, in the light of those vulnerabilities and given the interdependence of States, effective cooperation agreements with States that had access to the sea was essential in order to facilitate transit for the import and export of goods and access to resources by landlocked countries.

34. The importance of partnerships as a means of building capacity was highlighted by several representatives. In that regard, several other representatives called for sustainable and durable partnerships to enhance their ability to harvest the resources in their exclusive economic zones.

Information session

35. The Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and co-facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, David Donoghue, provided a briefing on progress in that process. He noted the growing importance of oceans in the discussions leading to the post-2015 development agenda, including the support for the inclusion of oceans as a theme of the interactive dialogues of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, to be held from 25 to 27 September 2015. He described the process relating to the post-2015 development agenda, including the intergovernmental negotiations, as well as related, interlinked processes, such as the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015.

36. He reported that indicators to measure the achievement of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda were being developed in the context of the Statistical Commission and a first draft had been discussed during the most recent session of the intergovernmental negotiations, in March 2015. It was envisaged that a set of indicators would be finalized by March 2016. The technical work on the indicators would be carried out by the Commission, aided by major stakeholders, including national statistical offices, civil society and academic inputs.

37. He concluded by stressing that further work was needed on the arrangements for follow-up and review of the agenda, proposed themes for the interactive dialogues to be held during the summit and the draft declaration.

38. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the current meeting would facilitate discussions on oceans in the context of the process for the post-2015 development agenda. Several representatives expressed support for the inclusion of oceans as a theme of the interactive dialogues at the summit.

39. Representatives stated that the outcome of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals should form the basis of the post-2015 development agenda, with several emphasizing the importance of a stand-alone goal on oceans in that agenda, as reflected in sustainable development goal 14. Several representatives noted, however, that the targets for that goal, in particular 14.c, should be consistent with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of

the Sea, and aligned with the language agreed upon in previous General Assembly resolutions and the outcome documents of sustainable development summits and conferences. Several representatives also noted that some of the targets lacked elements already reflected in the outcome of previous summits and conferences, including "The future we want". In that context, representatives reaffirmed that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea set out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and that it provided the basis for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources. One representative also expressed concern at the wording of target 14.6. It was also noted by another representative that the proposed provisional indicators for goal 14 did not address the important target on illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

40. With regard to indicators, views were expressed that they should be policy-relevant, ambitious, transparent and of high quality; they should measure actions and the impact of those actions towards accomplishing the goals and be consistent with existing international standards. One representative expressed concern that not all States would be able to track progress on the basis of all the indicators discussed to date.

41. One representative highlighted the importance of ensuring the effective implementation of sustainable development goal 14 and of devising a process to that end, making reference to continuing consultations on a proposal for triennial meetings specifically to monitor the implementation of, and progress towards achieving, goal 14.

Area of focus: oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic

42. In accordance with the format and annotated provisional agenda, the discussion panel on the topic of focus was organized in two segments structured around: (a) the environmental, social and economic dimensions of oceans and the progress made in integrating the three dimensions, including an overview of activities and initiatives promoting their integration; and (b) opportunities for, and challenges to, the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans. The segments were launched by presentations from panellists, followed by interactive discussions (see www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm).

1. Environmental, social and economic dimensions of oceans and progress made in integrating the three dimensions, including an overview of activities and initiatives promoting their integration

(a) Panel presentations

43. In segment 1, the Assistant Secretary-General and head of the New York office of the United Nations Environment Programme, Elliot Harris, described how the utilization of an ecosystem approach to protecting the marine environment could further the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. He highlighted the strategic directions formulated in regional seas conventions and action plans to effectively apply an ecosystem approach in the management of marine and coastal environments and the development of indicators to measure

progress and success to that end. Referring to indicators under development in the context of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, he noted that such indicators could contribute to monitoring progress towards the achievement of the relevant targets under sustainable development goal 14.

44. The Head of the Transport and Maritime Sectors Unit of the Sectoral Policies Department at the International Labour Organization (ILO), Brandt Wagner, provided an ILO perspective on the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. He highlighted the way in which ILO conventions, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other instruments addressed the conditions of work of seafarers and fishers, which constituted an important element of the social dimension of oceans. In that regard, he noted the lack of participation in some legal instruments addressing the social dimension as a challenge to overcome. Reference was made to the work of ILO in addressing forced labour for migrant fishers. He observed that the maritime work of ILO intersected with various organizations and partners and stressed the importance of inter-agency cooperation and coordination at all levels, including through UN-Oceans.

45. The founding President and Chief Executive Officer of the World Ocean Council, Paul Holthus, addressed the economic dimension of sustainable development, drawing attention to the important contribution of the oceans to the global economy and highlighting the wide range of ocean activities undertaken and services provided by the ocean business community, which generated trillions of dollars in revenue. He noted how the increasing number of uses of the oceans and regulations, in addition to the growing trend towards an integrated management of ocean activities, provided a gradually more complex and challenging business environment for ocean industries. In that regard, he underscored the importance of industry involvement in ocean policy discussions.

46. The Ambassador for Oceans, Seas and Fresh Water of Sweden, Lisa Svensson, highlighted the link between healthy oceans, a healthy planet and healthy people. She stated that it was important to consider the increasing pressures facing the oceans, including as a result of population growth and climate change, and the importance of implementing an integrated approach to the management of maritime spaces and of developing a blue economy. In that regard, she referred to the Baltic Sea as an example of good practices in knowledge-sharing, with lessons learned in the implementation of marine spatial planning. She underscored the importance of data, broad stakeholder involvement and partnerships, as well as the opportunities and challenges relating to the mapping and valuation of ecosystem services.

47. The Executive Secretary of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Sebastian Mathew, highlighted the important role played by small-scale fisheries for the sustainable development of coastal communities. He proposed a human rights-based approach in small-scale fisheries that could empower small-scale fishing communities to participate in decision-making processes, benefit vulnerable and marginalized groups in developing countries, address discrimination against women, as well as forced labour and child labour in fisheries, and protect the rights of migrant fishers and fish workers. Such an approach could further enhance social benefits and bring greater visibility to the contribution of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities to local and global food security and social development, as well as poverty eradication.

48. The representative of the International Chamber of Shipping, Simon Bennett, discussed the contribution of shipping to the three dimensions of sustainable development. With regard to environmental sustainability, he highlighted the projected investment that shipowners and operators would have to make in the near future in order to meet their obligations with regard to reductions in carbon dioxide and sulphur emissions, as well as ballast water management systems. Noting that shipping was a driver for green growth, he called for the adoption of a cost-benefit analysis before developing future regulations that might have an impact on the shipping industry. With regard to social sustainability, he highlighted the contribution of shipping to employment and noted that shipping was the only industrial sector with a comprehensive international framework in place addressing decent employment standards, following the entry into force of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (2006).

49. The Director of the Environment Laboratories, International Atomic Energy Agency, David Osborn, addressed the integration of the environmental, social and economic dimensions as they related to ocean acidification. He emphasized that changes in ocean acidity were occurring about 100 times faster than at any time in the previous 20 million years, with consequent deleterious environmental, social and economic effects. He explained how innovative governance tools, legislative reforms, diversification of incomes, increased awareness and knowledge at all levels, including the promotion of scientific understanding, could help to limit the source of ocean acidification, reduce its impacts and protect coastal environments and communities. He noted that, while adaptation action could buy time, mitigation of carbon dioxide emissions was an integral part of the solution.

50. The international legal adviser to the International Cable Protection Committee, Douglas Burnett, highlighted the importance of fibre-optic submarine cables for global communication and economic development and in providing the underlying platform for scientific and technological cooperation. He noted that peer review studies had shown that the impacts of submarine cables on the marine environment ranged from neutral to benign. Noting that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provided an appropriate legal framework for the protection of cables, he encouraged the implementation of its provisions through national legislation, given that few States had enacted such legislation.

51. The Acting Director of the Coastal Zone Management Unit, Barbados, Lorna Inniss, highlighted the role of science for coastal tourism in small island developing States, noting the threat posed by the tourism industry to areas that were vulnerable to intense coastal hazards, including erosion. She explained how the integration of conservation, regulation and stabilization, based on sound science, could assist in the sustainable management of coasts and in reducing human-induced impacts on coastal resources. She also emphasized that assessments every five years under the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects (the Regular Process), could provide States with a valuable tool for evaluating the progress made in the sustainable development of the oceans and their resources.

(b) Panel discussions

52. Several representatives expressed concern regarding the effects of ocean acidification and the vulnerability of communities to its impacts.

53. In response to a question as to how ocean acidification could be included in the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015, Mr. Osborn emphasized the need to include oceans in mitigation targets and adaptation measures. He also observed that the current emphasis on a 2°C warming target did not take into account the impact of ocean acidification, which would occur irrespective of warming. In response to a question regarding whether some areas were more at risk of ocean acidification, he explained that the areas most at risk would be those with limited capacity to adapt and respond because of their economic dependence on affected species or ecosystems. In addition, some marine areas and ecosystems were more vulnerable to ocean acidification because of the cumulative effects of other impacts. For example, coral reefs in some areas in the mid-Pacific had remained robust, the high levels of acidity notwithstanding, owing to the low level of pollution and absence of overfishing. One representative also cited national data that indicated that the good condition and resilience of corals in some areas under its jurisdiction resulted from the diversity of fish, which had reduced the growth of algae in bleached coral areas. Massive coral reef destruction within the region had therefore had an impact on areas within national jurisdiction. Mr. Osborn recommended reducing land-based run-off, fishing pressures and the introduction of invasive alien species, highlighting the need for increased global cooperation and international policy response in that regard.

54. He emphasized that, while ocean acidification presented real risks and challenges, there were also opportunities for growth. He noted that investing in science would increase understanding of the impacts of ocean acidification on a local scale and increase the capacity of a country to adapt. He stressed the need to understand impacts in an integrated manner, because an environmental impact, for example on food webs affecting whale populations, could then generate an economic impact, for example on whale-watching businesses.

55. Responding to a question on the impact of coastal hazards on fisheries, Ms. Inniss noted that nearshore small-scale fisheries were severely affected, a situation that was linked to the degradation of coral reefs caused by erosion and larger waves reaching the shore, causing small-scale fisheries to move further offshore. In that regard, to support the livelihoods of fishers, national consultations to incorporate fishers into development policies were under way, with a view to enhancing cooperation and avoiding potential conflict among stakeholders.

56. Highlighting the importance of protecting small-scale fisheries, some representatives stressed the need to tackle the issue of marginalization, where fishers, because of the development of tourism, were increasingly being pushed into more hazardous locations. In that regard, one representative noted the difficulties of demonstrating the value of small-scale fisheries, rendering it difficult to make a case for the allocation of resources to take on the issue. Mr. Mathew emphasized the necessity of recognizing that many small-scale fishers used low-impact gear, which helped to meet obligations under international instruments. He also stressed the need to recognize the cultural value of small-scale fisheries, for example for indigenous communities.

57. With regard to the role of States in addressing abusive practices and labour conditions at sea, Mr. Wagner noted that market forces, such as the purchasing policies of Governments and consumer preferences based on labour practices, could

have an impact. He also drew attention to the difficulty of gathering information on the conditions of fishers involved in illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. ILO therefore often relied on its social partners to gather such information and supported broad inter-agency cooperation.

58. Answering a question on the position of the shipping industry regarding proposals to establish marine protected areas in the high seas, Mr. Bennett noted that the issue was new for the industry and that it was necessary to have its full involvement, including through the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Chamber of Shipping, as well as taking into account existing rights under international instruments. The need to strike a balance between the freedom of the high seas and the protection of the marine environment, including through marine protected areas, was highlighted by one representative.

59. In response to a question raised as to how the increased costs of complying with environmental regulations would affect the volume of goods shipped worldwide, Mr. Bennett explained that such costs would ideally be borne by consumers, but that had not been the case because there were too many ships and too few cargoes. He further emphasized that some measures, while intended to reduce emissions, could increase them, for example by driving demand to other, less carbon-efficient modes of transportation.

60. Noting that communication and economies depended on the use and protection of submarine cables, a representative expressed concern that the laws and regulations necessary to protect them were lacking. Addressing the issue of the adequacy of the current legal framework, Mr. Burnett noted that one of the biggest problems was that many States had not complied with requirements under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to implement national legislation, with the vast majority having either no national legislation or outdated legislation. He also drew attention to the need for a legal basis to prosecute terrorists who targeted submarine cables. He noted good cooperation between the cable and fishing industries, which had been effective at reducing the risk of entanglements.

61. Representatives discussed the role of Governments in promoting integration and how a planning framework could provide for dynamic management to take into account new uses of the oceans and changing conditions. Ms. Svensson and Mr. Holthus noted that creating dynamism required being forward-thinking and developing projections of use and non-use values, as well as different scenarios for the future. Mr. Holthus also noted the concern that the business community would have with a top-down, rigid legislative framework.

62. With regard to marine spatial planning, one representative noted that its implementation required a coherent, inclusive and transparent process, involving the private sector and scientists. Several representatives asked whether a legal framework was needed to implement marine spatial planning beyond the territorial sea. In that regard, Ms. Svensson observed that, in the case of the Baltic Sea, which was covered by European Union directive 2008/56/EC, dated 17 June 2008, establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy and the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission), cooperation on marine spatial planning took place through a joint working group and was primarily based on a shared interest in the health of the Baltic Sea, rather than a legal framework.

63. Representatives stressed the importance of multisectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and sought input on how to develop coordination between industry, civil society and Governments. One representative noted that civil society and industry sometimes had differing perspectives on environmental issues. Mr. Holthus, however, observed that one point of common ground between Governments, civil society and industry was the need for sound science. It was important to ensure that the global business community was informed regarding policy initiatives in order to ensure buy-in. Ms. Svensson and Mr. Holthus also observed that, to secure the participation of the private sector, it was important to present the positive opportunities that could result from engagement and identify industry leaders with an interest in ocean issues. In response to a question regarding how to get the business community from small and medium-sized companies with the potential to have a major impact on oceans involved in ocean policy discussions, Mr. Holthus noted that the most important factor was for industries of any size to work together.

64. The need for scientific data on which to base policymaking, in particular in areas such as the Arctic and Antarctic, where climate change was altering usage patterns, was underlined. Advice was sought for small island developing States wishing to implement marine spatial planning, consider the valuation of ecosystem services and bring the private sector on board given the cost of sound science, which could bankrupt such States, and the difficulty in finding economists familiar with such tools as valuation of ecosystem services. Ms. Svensson expressed the view that part of the problem was limited communication within the scientific community. In addition, while there might be sufficient science available, it was also necessary to make it relevant to policymaking. She drew attention to the benefits of engaging local communities in mapping and valuing ecosystem services and presenting valuation as an investment rather than as a cost.

65. One representative asked whether programmes existed to strengthen cooperation among scientists, owing to the importance of sharing information and good practices in tackling ocean issues. It was noted that collaboration among scientists was continuing, including through the Regular Process. Furthermore, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were jointly developing a training programme on marine scientific research. The OceanTeacher Global Academy, a training programme implemented by the Commission to develop regional capacity in ocean science, observation, data collection, monitoring and the mitigation of coastal hazards, was also highlighted.

66. A question was raised about what a cross-cutting approach to the targets included under sustainable development goal 14 would entail. In that respect, Mr. Holthus said that the targets were sufficiently broad to be relevant to many sectors and be cross-cutting. The issue, he noted, was that, while some were specific in scope, others were more broadly drafted, making them more difficult for industry to make operational or implement. In that regard, it was considered important for all stakeholders to work together for effective implementation. In response, one representative noted that some targets might be deliberately ambiguous but that cooperation with multiple stakeholders, including industry, could be taken into account at the level of implementation.

67. Some representatives referred to the experience of the regional seas conventions and action plans in developing indicators. Mr. Harris explained that

technical experts within those conventions and action plans had made recommendations, but that the indicators had been agreed upon by States. He also explained that the process might have varied by region, depending on the levels of capacity and the methodologies employed. In response to questions regarding the possible use of regional indicators in the context of the sustainable development goals, he noted that each region had different characteristics and methodologies and a regional approach could thus be useful and also bring about economies of scale.

68. With regard to indicators to assess progress in relation to small-scale fisheries, Mr. Mathew suggested that information about traditional institutions and cooperatives for fishers and fish workers, the level of participatory processes in decision-making and cooperative arrangements and devolution of power to a community could be useful indicators.

2. Opportunities for, and challenges to, the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans

(a) Panel presentations

69. In segment 2, the Head of the Water and Ocean Governance Programme of the United Nations Development Programme Bureau of Development Policy, Andrew Hudson, highlighted the importance of restoring the oceans as an engine for sustainable economic development, job creation and poverty reduction by addressing such pressures as overfishing, invasive species, pollution (especially nutrients and plastics) and ocean acidification. He explained that reducing or removing the market and/or policy failures that caused those pressures could result in substantial environmental improvements, job growth and overall socioeconomic development.

70. The Director of the Centre for Resource Management and Environment Studies of University of the West Indies, Robin Mahon, focused on the implications of the regional-global governance nexus for sustainability through the example of the wider Caribbean region. He highlighted the problem of fragmentation in the governance of ocean activities as a major impediment to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and described the benefits of establishing a framework for the governance of ocean activities as a single global architecture or network comprising global-regional subnetworks for various sectors and cross-cutting regional subnetworks. He noted that successful implementation would depend on effective linkages between global and regional subnetworks for various sectors and cross-cutting regional subnetworks.

71. The Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, Transform Aqorau, described the experience of the parties to the Nauru Agreement Concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest in reshaping fisheries management in the Pacific. He emphasized the potential benefits for coastal States of taking greater ownership of the development of their fisheries. He noted that the development of alternative innovative arrangements for the allocation of fishing rights, such as replacing the licensing of fishing opportunities to foreign fishing companies with rights-based schemes, could empower developing countries, create strong market-based incentives and jobs and promote innovation and strategic partnerships. He noted, however, that many challenges to implementing such an innovative approach existed, including within existing regional fisheries management organizations. He highlighted the need for

policy coherence on the part of donor countries in support of sustainable fisheries in developing countries.

72. The representative of the China Institute for Marine Affairs, State Oceanic Administration of China, Wanfei Qiu, provided an overview of Chinese efforts to promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, including through its national ocean policy, laws and regulations. She also described the evolution in the use of tools and initiatives, such as marine protected areas, the restoration of coastal habitats, the promotion of blue economy initiatives nationally and internationally and alternative livelihood programmes for fishers. She highlighted challenges for the sustainable development of the oceans, including the need to better balance the economic dimension with the environmental and social dimensions, given that the promotion of economic growth, while it had helped alleviate poverty for millions of people, had also resulted in major environmental problems.

73. The Deputy Executive Secretary of the Global Ocean Commission, Rémi Parmentier, considered the issue of indicators in relation to the sustainable development of oceans and seas based on recent work carried out by the Commission. In particular, he highlighted the proposals of the Commission illustrating policy-relevant and action-oriented indicators for the targets associated with sustainable development goal 14. He expressed the view that the list of indicators for sustainable development goals proposed by the Statistical Commission was preliminary. He stated that further work was required, including with the input of the larger ocean community, to make the indicators stronger, more practical, policy-relevant and action-oriented. He also referred to a proposal by the Global Ocean Commission to create an independent ocean accountability board to benchmark progress on ocean conservation.

74. The Director of the Gerard J. Mangone Center for Marine Policy and President of the Global Ocean Forum, Biliana Cicin-Sain, spoke about enabling factors in achieving the sustainable development of oceans, based on a review of experiences with national and regional ocean policies. She underscored the importance of enabling factors, such as the legal framework, policies, marine science, infrastructure, including technology and technology transfer, capacity-building and resource mobilization, cooperation and coordination, and systems for measuring progress. She illustrated how 15 States and four regions had moved towards integrated governance of ocean activities and highlighted success factors, such as common principles, formal coordination of institutions, political support and binding policies, enabling stakeholders and ensuring adequate funding.

75. The leader for the marine action plan on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture within the Global Marine Programme of the World Wide Fund for Nature, Helena Motta, highlighted challenges to the management and governance of small-scale fisheries in developing countries, with a focus on Africa, including the need for equitable access, tenure rights and sustainable fisheries. Noting that small-scale fisheries were characterized by poor governance, lack of empowerment and habitat destruction, among other things, she highlighted activities undertaken in Mozambique to tackle those issues, including the monitoring of fisheries and diversification of species fished, data collection, participatory decision-making and co-management by fishers, and the challenges encountered, observing that the activities had had mixed results.

76. The Legal Adviser to the Secretary of State of the Sea of the Government of Portugal, Vasco Becker-Weinberg, provided an overview of the work and experience of Portugal in elaborating legislation on marine spatial planning and management of its areas within national jurisdiction, specifically with regard to integrating the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. He described the process leading to the development of the law, the requirement for consultations with stakeholders, the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into decision-making by the authorities, inter-agency cooperation and coordination, the consideration of the legal status of different maritime zones and other salient features of the law.

77. The Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, in charge of protection of the seas, the blue economy and blue growth, Silvia Velo, addressed the issue of marine protected areas and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, including as a possible approach for the sustainable development and blue growth of small island developing States, which shared some of the same vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities. She noted that the establishment of a network of marine protected areas and the development of sustainable blue growth, based on the European Union Blue Growth strategy, were priorities for the region. She observed that strategic planning and local involvement were critical to any success, as was good governance that ensured a balanced integration of the environmental, social and economic dimensions.

78. The Coordinator of the EAF-Nansen project at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Kwame Koranteng, focused on measures to strengthen the knowledge base for sustainable development in fisheries. He described how the ecosystem approach to fisheries incorporated the three dimensions of sustainable development and described the history, structure and objectives of the project and the results achieved in terms of developing an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, developing capacity and collecting data. He noted the need for a well-functioning fisheries administration to have regular processes in place to monitor the extent to which a fishery had moved towards achieving the desired objectives, as well as the human and financial resources necessary to follow up on agreed management actions.

79. The head of the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section at the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Julian Barbière, considered the need for marine science and the transfer of marine technology. He expressed concern over the gap in scientific capacity between countries, which could be addressed by identifying regional and subregional focal points and the transfer of marine technology. He described the criteria and guidelines on the transfer of marine technology, adopted by the Assembly of the Commission in 2003, and the potential for a clearing-house mechanism. He also highlighted the development of a global ocean science report, whereby the capacity needs and opportunities in ocean science would be assessed, and the establishment of the OceanTeacher Global Academy to provide training courses relating to Commission programmes worldwide.

80. The Senior Nutrition Adviser at the WorldFish Centre, Bangladesh, Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, explained that many low-income countries would be unable to achieve optimal levels of capacity-building without strategic regional collaboration and partnerships, drawing on examples in particular from Bangladesh. She

underlined that capacity-building with enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development required a people-centred community approach, based on human rights, equity and good governance at all levels, and the involvement of a range of stakeholders from various sectors. She emphasized that a long-term, sustained effect of capacity-building required a focus on educating young people. She noted that the use of new technology, such as cellular phones, had transformed access to knowledge, creating growing awareness in communities.

81. The Senior Environmental Specialist at the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Nicole Glineur, described the activities of GEF in supporting the sustainable management of ocean activities, including the international waters programme, the programme on global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction and the large marine ecosystems project. She elaborated on the role of resource mobilization in supporting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and provided some examples of how the three pillars had been integrated into initiatives financed by GEF.

(b) Panel discussions

82. The benefits of restoring and protecting ocean ecosystems as a major driver for job growth and overall socioeconomic development across multiple sectors in various oceans-related industries were highlighted. Mr. Hudson noted the challenges and high costs in regulating activities that were largely land-based, but also described new business opportunities for innovators. In particular, he described the potential for a new technology industry in ballast water treatment and explained that, while ship companies would need to invest in ballast water systems, there were clear opportunities for emerging companies, growth in research and development and job creation. A representative highlighted in that regard the value of the blue economy in driving economic growth and environmental protection.

83. With regard to fisheries, noting the efforts of the parties to the Nauru Agreement to restrict access to fisheries in their exclusive economic zones, a representative asked whether that had had a positive impact on the tuna fishery in the Pacific. Another representative emphasized the importance of the conservation of tuna stocks in the Pacific and of cooperation among States in the region and regional fisheries management organizations, in order to achieve the sustainable development of tuna fisheries, including by supporting initiatives to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. In that context, Mr. Aqorau described the history of the tuna fishery in the Pacific, in which prohibiting fishing in pockets of the high seas had been made a condition for access to the fishery resources in the exclusive economic zones of the adjacent coastal States and the resulting economic benefits to coastal developing States. He noted the applicability of such schemes to other fisheries, but also highlighted the need for regional support and political will in the development of the governance framework, as well as in addressing challenges in fisheries management, such as ensuring compliance with agreed limits on access to fishery resources. He also described the need for effective monitoring, control and surveillance to ensure that States did not exceed fishing limits, including through the use of electronic reporting and independent audits. Mr. Aqorau further described dysfunctions in the decision-making architecture of regional fisheries management organizations, which had led to a decline in the level of fish stocks. He provided examples of regional fisheries management organizations in which the

parties had ignored scientific advice or been unwilling to take measures to achieve the conservation of the fishery resources.

84. Some representatives sought clarification on the challenges of instituting market-based arrangements, such as rights-based schemes, and on the key characteristics of such schemes and their possible application in other regions. Mr. Aqorau described the challenges in obtaining support for rights-based fisheries from market States. In the case of the parties to the Nauru Agreement, he stressed that only those countries that supported arrangements to shift rights to coastal States would enjoy the benefits of access to the resources of the countries that were parties to the Nauru Agreement. He observed that the success of the arrangement could be attributed in part to the financing generated by the scheme, which allowed for policy decisions to be made independently from donor objectives. The need for institutional support, as well as assistance with science and data gathering, was stressed. He further noted the benefits for developing coastal States of innovative approaches to the processing and marketing of fishery products, such as contract processing and fisheries certification. He also described the development benefits from innovative approaches to fisheries, such as allowing developing States to hold interests in foreign processing facilities, which could become part of their national economy.

85. Mr. Aqorau said closing off the high seas to commercial fishing could allow developing countries to supply all the raw materials and fish products for developed countries. Such an arrangement would allow developing States to become fully integrated into the world trading system and advance progress in achieving the sustainable development goals. A representative noted that such proposals raised delicate issues for many States, owing to the importance of fisheries for economic development. Problems of the overcapitalization of fishing fleets, following the establishment of exclusive economic zones, which had led to overfishing, and difficulties in access to fishery resources within the regulatory areas of regional fisheries management organizations were highlighted. Those issues were complex and there were continuing efforts to address issues relating to fishing subsidies under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

86. The discussion of the need for effective governance of small-scale fisheries was welcomed as timely by some representatives, who expressed concern over the disadvantageous position of small-scale and artisanal fishers in most countries, as well as the challenges to their being stronger participants in, and beneficiaries of, sustainable development efforts. In particular, the challenges posed by conflicts between small-scale fishers, fishers with larger capacity and industrial fisheries were noted. Further information was sought on what action had been taken in Africa to resolve such conflicts successfully. Ms. Motta observed that small-scale fishers were not considered to be major contributors to gross domestic product, had a very low level of participation in decision-making and were not well represented. That being the case, other fishers with stronger representation were able to fish, without any restriction, in areas that were predominantly used by small-scale fishers, thereby depriving them of benefits and livelihoods. In addition, the increase in oil and gas exploration and other extractive industries, which appeared to be accorded priority over other development activities, as well as boundary issues and migration to coastal areas, had resulted in the dilution of the customary rights of small-scale and artisanal fishers and their displacement. To resolve the situation, she stressed that spatial planning and enforcement, together with the granting of exclusive tenure

rights, strengthening the participation of small-scale fishers in decision-making and increased political will were crucial.

87. In that regard, a representative observed the need for customary or traditional fishing rights to be supported by Governments through legal means or by-laws and customary tenure, such as those in the Pacific region.

88. The opportunity for building a more holistic governance of ocean activities at the global and regional levels was stressed. Examples were provided of transboundary cooperation, including the Coral Triangle Initiative and the establishment of transboundary marine protected areas based on the migratory patterns of marine turtles. Ms. Qiu stressed the importance of such transboundary cooperation, given the interconnected nature of marine ecosystems. Mr. Mahon highlighted the need to identify existing platforms that had the scale and geographical scope to address such issues, as had been done in the case of the wider Caribbean regional ocean governance framework. Noting that transboundary cooperation was also essential from a scientific perspective, Ms. Qiu highlighted a report on marine sustainable development published by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation secretariat as a way to improve collaboration among regional scientists.

89. Fragmentation in the governance of ocean activities was identified by Mr. Mahon as an impediment to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. With specific reference to conservation and sustainable use in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the view was expressed that proposals on the need for governance mechanisms and policy coherence to tackle the issue of fragmentation had to be legitimate to be successful. The importance of preserving the delicate balance struck in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was underscored in that regard.

90. Consideration was given to the issue of the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development through integrated national ocean policies. A representative noted that in the wider Caribbean region only 4 of 30 countries had an ocean policy at the national level, which resulted in an inherent difficulty in elaborating a regional ocean policy. With regard to the modalities for the development of national policies, Ms. Cicin-Sain noted the establishment of high-level inter-agency committees in various countries.

91. In response to a query on how to balance short-term priorities and long-term goals, Ms. Cicin-Sain referred to the example of the United States of America, where similar executive actions had been continuously implemented since 2004, changes in government notwithstanding. Mr. Becker-Weinberg noted that the law on marine spatial planning in Portugal ensured continuity in case of changes in government and incorporated a monitoring mechanism that required a report from the Government to the parliament every three years to determine, among other things, what action was being taken and whether targets, goals and deadlines were being met.

92. Representatives discussed the importance of consultations at the national and regional levels in the development of integrated policies and spatial plans. Addressing the modalities of consultations, Mr. Becker-Weinberg noted that stakeholder consultations in Portugal had involved both technical experts and political authorities. He further explained that the base law on marine spatial planning had been drafted by the Government following interdepartmental technical

discussions and adopted by the parliament following public hearings involving a wide cross section of stakeholders.

93. With regard to consultations at the regional level, including on developing marine protected areas and sharing limited resources for sustainable development, Ms. Velo noted that the Mediterranean was vulnerable but that the surrounding coastal States had adopted instruments to facilitate the sustainable use and management of that shared resource. In that regard, European Union directive 2014/89/EU, dated 23 July 2014, establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and directive 2008/56/EC (see above), were highlighted. Both directives were aimed at achieving a good environmental status of the sea by 2020 and based on participation among different levels of Governments and the inclusion of other stakeholders, such as local communities. A third instrument was the trilateral 1999 declaration on the creation of the Pelagos sanctuary for the conservation of Mediterranean marine mammals. Reference was also made by several representatives to the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention).

94. Several representatives welcomed the information regarding the process of developing and applying marine spatial planning to the conservation and sustainable use and governance of ocean activities. With regard to whether there was or should be a model scale of priority to determine whether some issues or uses should take precedence over others, or whether the scale could be adapted to suit each case or circumstance, Mr. Becker-Weinberg noted that that depended on how marine spatial planning was perceived by individual States. By way of example, he observed that in Portugal a mechanism for resolving conflicts concerning competing uses of the oceans had been developed, which took into account the specificities associated with the use of marine space for economic and development activities. In that regard, it was noted that the overriding consideration was that an activity would be supported only if it were deemed to be environmentally sustainable, following which other economic and social criteria would be considered, such as the potential for job creation, which was a national priority for Portugal. Thus, any mechanism of prioritization would need to depend on national priorities for development.

95. Several representatives, noting a shift from integrated coastal management to marine spatial planning for integrated coastal governance, asked whether the current international legal framework was adequate for marine spatial planning or integrated governance. Ms. Cicin-Sain noted that the integrated approach in the context of the management of exclusive economic zones was new and it was too early to determine whether there was a gap. Regarding areas beyond national jurisdiction, she noted that, as with experience in areas under national jurisdiction, cooperation between regional seas programmes and regional fisheries management organizations remained limited and area-based management would pose a challenge, given that no authority existed to establish such areas. It was noted that that was an issue subject to forthcoming negotiations on a legally binding agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

96. A question was raised as to how to bridge the gap between measures taken at the global and local levels and what an appropriate balance might be between global top-down and local bottom-up approaches. In response, Mr. Barbière noted that

measures at the regional level, for example, through the regional centres of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission or regional seas conventions and action plans, could play a role in bridging that gap. The point was made that integrated and cross-sectoral management should not be seen as a replacement for good sectoral management.

97. With regard to enabling measures, one representative noted that the transfer of marine technology was at the core of part XIV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which that representative considered to be the least developed part of the Convention in terms of compliance, to the detriment of developing States. In that regard, Mr. Barbière indicated that the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission on the issue was aimed at making the relevant provisions of the Convention operational. The benefits were highlighted of taking into account the clearing-house mechanism and funds for the transfer of marine technology in working towards implementation of the sustainable development goals.

98. One representative said that, in accordance with part XIII of the Convention, all scientific research activities in the oceans constituted marine scientific research.

99. One representative, noting the upcoming release of the first global integrated marine assessment under the Regular Process, suggested that the Commission should consider the relevant portions of that assessment on capacity-building needs in the preparation of its global ocean science report.

100. In response to clarification sought on the work of the Commission on taxonomy in areas beyond national jurisdiction, Mr. Barbière noted that the Ocean Biogeographic Information System was the largest repository of information of scientific knowledge on the oceans, including areas both beyond and within national jurisdiction. He also clarified that the Commission was working with the International Seabed Authority to see how taxonomy information on areas beyond national jurisdiction could benefit the work of the Authority. A question was also raised regarding the compatibility of GEF programmes covering areas beyond national jurisdiction with the work currently under way in the context of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. In that regard, Ms. Glineur stated that GEF was working with regional fisheries management organizations on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks under existing legal instruments, including the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement) and FAO instruments, and that the projects in question were aimed at applying tools and not developing legal instruments.

101. In response to a question regarding the collection of data under the EAF-Nansen project, Mr. Koranteng explained that a broad database of information had been compiled. The data belonged to the State in which they were gathered, but access could be given to others with the consent of the coastal State concerned. A new data policy of the project would make the data public after five years unless the rights holder objected. The focus of the Nansen project activities had evolved over time to match the needs of its beneficiaries, from looking for resources to develop fisheries, to assessment for fisheries management, to training scientists, to the application of

the ecosystem approach to fisheries. Data gathered through the project were also being used in new ways, such as in assisting environment ministries.

102. Support was expressed for decision-making on the basis of the best available science. It was observed, however, that the lack, or limited nature, of available scientific knowledge should not preclude decision-making. In response to a question regarding specific areas that should be accorded priority in the development of scientific expertise by developing countries, Mr. Barbière noted that, although there was no set hierarchy, some key areas and methodologies had been identified where the development of scientific knowledge was most cost-effective.

103. One representative sought clarification on the need for capacity-building for scientific research in establishing a regional framework for the governance of ocean activities, such as the wider Caribbean regional ocean governance framework. Mr. Mahon noted the difficulties in meeting the capacity needs of many smaller States in the region and stressed the need to rationalize where to develop that capacity and how to share it among States. The establishment of a regional university for scientific research could provide a solution in that regard.

104. Representatives discussed ways in which to improve capacity-building in matters relating to oceans at the local level. In particular, questions were posed regarding the possible role of technology, such as cellular phones, how to increase the participation of women in fisheries to increase productivity and how to tackle the impacts on the livelihoods of local communities when conservation and management measures were put in place. Ms. Thilsted provided an example of how technology and innovation could further the dissemination of information to local communities, in particular in their local languages. She also provided some examples of projects that had increased the role of women in the fisheries supply chain and noted that women in some countries were increasingly moving into traditionally male-dominated fields. She cautioned that it was necessary to monitor how those projects were being implemented as additional roles for women might result in an increase in their workload and the transfer of responsibilities to other members of the family. In terms of measures to mitigate the loss of livelihoods, training, the availability of microcredit and the possibility of conditional cash transfers were highlighted as possible tools. Ms. Glineur noted that GEF, the World Bank and national banks might have programmes to assist in developing some of those tools, including through temporary grants.

105. Some representatives noted the important role of experts in the process of developing indicators for the sustainable development goals, in particular the participation of national statistical commissions. The input from ocean experts from States and, when necessary, the advice of competent organizations of the United Nations system, were also regarded as beneficial to the process. One representative noted that indicators regarding fisheries subsidies, based on the various types of subsidies, could be useful and more effective in terms of accountability. Some representatives queried whether the contribution of fisheries to the gross domestic product of developing countries could be used as an indicator for sustainable development goal 14. In response, Mr. Aqorau noted that there were revenues that were not captured in gross domestic product and that developing States had diverse interests, including in all facets of the value chain, from rights holders to markets. Mr. Parmentier suggested that, in view of the forthcoming round of WTO discussions

in December 2015, the international community should request the revival of the discussions on fisheries subsidies on the basis of sustainable development goal 14.

106. Some representatives asked how indicators could be developed to address capacity development and knowledge and technology transfer for marine science, and how to make them both meaningful and measureable so as not to overburden developing countries. Mr. Koranteng acknowledged the difficulties in developing appropriate indicators and stated that the basic elements could consist of measuring what actions were taken and their effect and effectiveness. Mr. Barbière noted that a single indicator might not suffice and suggested a composite index, including factors such as scientific infrastructure, investment in science and scientific interaction at the international level.

107. Following up on the reference to difficulties in enforcing targets deemed overly ambitions, Ms. Qiu explained that the challenge stemmed in part from centralized decision-making by people who were not fully aware of conservation needs and with insufficient involvement of local stakeholders and communities to ensure transparency and a regular review of the effectiveness of marine policies.

108. In response to questions regarding the proposal by the Global Ocean Commission to establish an independent ocean accountability board, Mr. Parmentier explained that the idea had been inspired by the Financial Stability Board, which had been established in 2009 following the financial crisis. He indicated that the question of the composition of such a board remained open, but that it could consist of independent persons who could assess progress towards ocean conservation and report to the international community. One representative said that such an accountability regime was not a convincing idea. Indicators would be used to assess progress. In addition, the representative stressed that accountability was linked to the transfer of technology and financing for development.

109. One representative asked whether there was a link between the proposed board and the proposal made by a representative to hold a series of triennial meetings to assess progress in implementation of sustainable development goal 14. Mr. Parmentier observed that, while there was no such connection, some linkages could partly resolve the problem of fragmentation of governance of ocean activities.

Agenda item 4
Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

110. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs made a statement in his capacity as the focal point for UN-Oceans, providing information on the activities of UN-Oceans since the fifteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process.[3]

111. He stated that UN-Oceans had continued to work towards the identification of possible areas for collaboration and synergies, as mandated in the revised terms of reference and within the context of its work programme for 2014-2015. In that regard, the first step of developing an inventory of mandates, priorities and current and planned activities of the members of UN-Oceans had been completed, with the identification of relevant mandates. Members were proceeding to the further elaboration of the inventory in the form of a user-friendly online searchable database, developed and funded by FAO, which would be made available on the UN-Oceans

[3] The full statement is available from www.unoceans.org/documents/en/.

website (www.unoceans.org) as soon as the initial inventory of activities was completed. The next step, facilitated by the online database, was to identify synergies or joint activities illustrating existing and possible areas for collaboration. He noted that continued updates and fine-tuning of the inventory, including increasing its user-friendly operation, would require sustainable funding. In that regard, he indicated that, to date, no contributions earmarked for UN-Oceans had been made to the trust fund established for the Office of Legal Affairs by the Secretary-General to support the promotion of international law, as referred to in resolution 69/245. He invited Member States and others in a position to do so to make such contributions.

112. He said that, apart from teleconferences, UN-Oceans had, upon a suggestion by members to hold a face-to-face meeting every other year on a rotation basis at the headquarters of one of its members, convened one such meeting on 20 March 2015 at IMO headquarters in London.[4]

Agenda item 5
Process for the selection of topics and panellists so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly

113. The Co-Chairs introduced item 5, noting that it reflected paragraph 292 of General Assembly resolution 69/245. Representatives were invited to provide their views and make proposals on ways to devise a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panellists, so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

114. The Director of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea then provided an update on the status of the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing States, to attend the meetings of the Informal Consultative Process. It was pointed out that the trust fund played an important role in facilitating the participation of representatives and panellists from developing States. The Director recalled that the General Assembly in its resolution 69/245 had encouraged Member States to make financial contributions to the trust fund, in order to ensure that it maintained a workable balance.

Agenda item 6
Issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea

115. The Co-Chairs recalled that the General Assembly had, in paragraph 298 of resolution 69/245, decided that the Informal Consultative Process would focus its discussions at its seventeenth meeting, in 2016, on marine debris, plastics and microplastics. They drew attention to the composite streamlined list of issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea and invited comments from representatives. The issue of fishery subsidies, as contained in the list, was highlighted by one representative. The Co-Chairs invited any representative wishing to propose additional issues for inclusion in the list to submit them to the Co-Chairs or to the Secretariat in writing before the end of the current meeting.

[4] The report of the meeting will be made available at www.unoceans.org.